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The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Letter dated 26 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on the third anniversary of the murder of Bishop Gerardi on 26 April 2001, issued on 25 April 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

01-35474 (E) 300401 300401

Annex to the letter dated 26 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the third anniversary of the murder of Bishop Gerardi on 26 April 2001 issued on 25 April 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union respectfully honours the memory of Monsignor Gerardi today, three years after his brutal murder, and welcomes the recent opening of his murder trial.

The European Union has noted with approval President Alfonso Portillos's repeatedly expressed determination to see Bishop Gerardi's murder solved. It sympathizes with and supports the judges, judicial authorities, members of the legal profession and other actors involved throughout the difficulties of this entire process of investigation and trial, particularly those who have become the target of threats and assaults.

The European Union views with the greatest concern the increasing number of threats and assaults made not only against judges and members of the judicial authorities, but also against human rights activists, journalists and political leaders. The European Union utterly condemns these acts, which impede progress in strengthening the rule of law, and urges the Government of Guatemala to protect those targeted and have the incidents investigated, so that legal action can be taken to punish those responsible.

The European Union calls upon all Guatemalans to respect human rights and the rule of law. It urges the appropriate authorities to combat impunity before the law and to implement the recommendations of the Commission for Historical Clarification, with special emphasis on the establishment of a follow-up body. The European Union also stresses the importance of the recommendations contained in the Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory (REMHI) report "Guatemala Nunca Más" (Guatemala Never Again).

The European Union also strongly encourages all Guatemalans, and particularly those in authority, to renew their efforts to implement the peace accords, which continue to have a central and fundamental role to play in the strengthening of democracy, national reconciliation and development in Guatemala.

Ultimately, the European Union reiterates the importance implied by the clarification of the assassination of Monsignor Gerardi, as well as the punishment of the perpetrators, in the framework of efforts to combat impunity and to consolidate a society governed by the rule of law.

The European Union looks forward to maintaining constructive bilateral relations with Guatemala based on the respect for human rights and the implementation of the peace accords.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with the present declaration.